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ACTION WHA-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DODE-00
DOEE-00 DS-00 EB-00 VC-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
IO-00 L-00 VCE-00 AC-00 NRC-00 NSAE-00 OES-00
OIC-00 PA-00 MCC-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 FMPC-00
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DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 SWCI-00
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O 111812Z APR 05
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0140
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY
HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D), B6

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 001036

NSC FOR CBARTON
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2014
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, KDEM, VE
SUBJECT: SUMATE'S PUBLIC CONCERNS

REF: 2004 CARACAS 03395

Classified By: Abelardo A. Arias, Political Counselor, for Reason 1.4(d)
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Summary

1. (C) Venezuelan NGO Sumate representatives April 1 criticized the National Electoral Council's (CNE) expansion of electronic voting, saying it endangered the secrecy of the vote. They also announced Sumate's new communications strategy and efforts to branch out into the areas of citizen oversight of public offices and tracking of political persecutions.

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Summary.

----- Secrecy of the Vote At Risk -----

2. (C) For Venezuelan NGO Sumate [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the National Electoral Council's (CNE) intended use of electronic voting notebooks for the August 7 parochial board and local councilman elections and the December 4 National Assembly elections endangers the secrecy of the vote. The electronic voting expansion converts the manual voting notebooks, a record of those who voted, into electronic records that Sumate says can be more easily manipulated. During a press conference April 1, Sumate representatives asserted that by electronically crossing the order in which voters sign in with the order of votes cast on the Smartmatic voting machines, election officials could determine what vote each person cast. Estevez told the press that under the current conditions, there was no guarantee of transparency and impartiality during the electoral process. [REDACTED]

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----- Sumate's Monthly Publication Tracks Elections -----

3. (U) During the press conference, Cabana also announced the launch of a monthly publication "Sumate's Electoral Monitor," to track the electoral process providing information and analysis for a national and international audience. The publication includes sections citing problems with Actors (i.e. the CNE), Electorate (i.e. the electoral registry), and Process (i.e. election boards and voting centers). A timeline detailing election requirements with due dates for completion highlights CNE delays or failures to comply with electoral law. In the first issue, Sumate noted the CNE had not presented its administrative accounts for the 2004 elections. The CNE's delays in publishing official information in the Electoral Gazettes, the article said, limited citizen participation. The publication also sets out irregularities and CNE failures to act within legally established timelines and parameters.

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